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HURRICANE SEASON IS HERE — REGISTER NOW FOR SPECIAL NEEDS SHELTER

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Hurricane Season is now in session and the Florida Department of Health in Citrus County (DOH-Citrus) and the Citrus County Sheriff's Office Emergency Operations Division encourages residents to register now for the Special Needs Shelter by visiting www.sheriffcitrus.org/emergency-management.php#special-needs.



The Special Needs Shelter, located at Forest Ridge Elementary School, 2927 N. Forest Ridge Blvd. in Hernando, is designed to meet the needs of individuals who require assistance that exceeds services provided at a general population shelter. If a person is medically stable but needs help with basic tasks or uses an electronic medical device and has no other evacuation option, they should pre-register for the Special Needs Shelter by filling out the [Voluntary Special Needs Program Registration](#).

Pre-registration also helps to identify a person's disability, plus the special equipment or specific assistance needed during an evacuation. This includes transportation to a family member's or friend's house (within the county) or to the Special Needs Shelter, if you have no other sheltering option.

"First and foremost, we must remind people that the shelter must be their last resort especially with current conditions," said DOH-Citrus Emergency Preparedness Planner Amanda Woodward. "We are prepared to follow the latest guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for protecting residents from COVID-19 while sheltering, but we want people to know that if they are able, evacuation of approximately 20-50 miles out of the area will be their best option," said Woodward.

What to expect at a Special Needs Shelter?

A Special Needs Shelter does not provide the comfort or convenience of a home or hotel, nor does it provide the level of care found in a medical facility. A Special Needs Shelter is typically crowded and noisy; however, you can expect the following:

- Food and water. If you want special food or snacks or have dietary restrictions, you must bring it with you. Food must be non-perishable.

- Basic medical assistance and monitoring. Complex medical equipment or care is not available in the Special Needs Shelter.
- An area for you and your caregiver to sleep.
- Back-up electricity for light and essential medical equipment.

What to bring to the shelter (Please write your name on all personal items):

- Medication to last at least seven (7) days
- Oxygen/oxygen supplies, including oxygen concentrator with extension cord
- Special dietary foods
- Food or snacks for the first 24 hours
- Bedding (blanket, sheet, pillow)
- Air mattress or cushioned sleeping pad
- Two (2) changes of clothing
- Personal hygiene items (i.e. diapers, deodorant, toothbrush, etc.)
- Important papers in a zip-lock bag (i.e. insurance papers, credit card, money)
- Plastic bags for soiled items
- Cleaning supplies like soap, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes (no aerosolized disinfectants will be allowed in the shelter)
- Cloth face covering

Companions may accompany registrants but due to space limitations, only one companion per registrant is permitted.

Special Needs Shelter registrants are allowed to bring their pets to the Special Needs Shelter; however, the primary care for the pet must rest with the resident or caregiver.

For more information or assistance, call the Citrus County Sheriff's Office Emergency Operations Division at 352-249-2705 or the Florida Department of Health in Citrus County at 352-527-0068.

For more information about DOH-Citrus, go to www.CitrusCountyHealth.org or follow us on Twitter at [@FLHealthCitrus](https://twitter.com/FLHealthCitrus).

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](http://www.nabph.org), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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